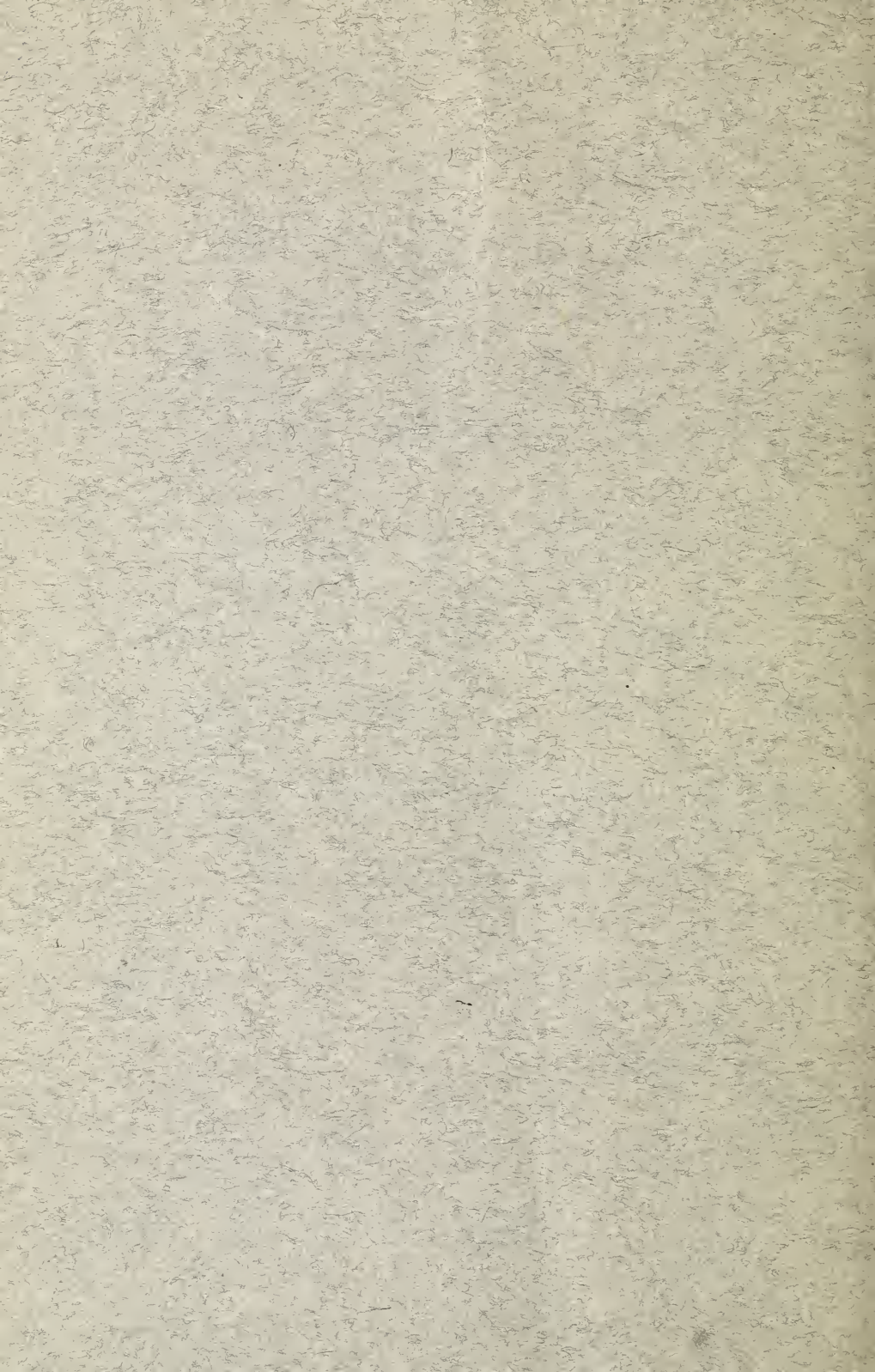


M 1798

Abraham Lincoln

An Address by

D R. F. A. N O B L E



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

AN ADDRESS BY

DR. F. A. NOBLE

PASTOR OF THE
UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



DELIVERED BEFORE THE

CHICAGO METHODIST SOCIAL UNION

AT THE

OAKLAND METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ON THE

BIRTHDAY OF THE MARTYRED CHIEF

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

On all fit occasions, ever since his untimely taking off, the people have been paying tribute to the memory of Mr. Lincoln. This is well. The great and good souls who from century to century take their places and act their parts in the movements of society both deserve and repay a thorough and reverent study. Outside the things which concern the relations of man to his Maker, few objects are more rewarding than the careful contemplation of the lives and characters of those who brought large endowments with them into the world and then used their powers for the exaltation of humanity. Whether found in the ranks of art or literature, of science or statesmanship, of exploration or war, of church workers or social reformers, large, strong men, morally excellent men, epoch-making men, always furnish an inspiration and distil a wisdom which amply repay the most thorough investigation of their minds and movements.

Mr. Lincoln was both great and good; and he was the pivot on which turned mighty events. In the providence of God, no other man of the generation to which he belonged was permitted to do so much as he towards giving shape to public affairs and advancing the rights of man and conserving the interests of liberty and union. Mr. Choate, our Ambassador to England, has said that the figure of Mr. Lincoln will stand out a thousand years from now as conspicuous as it does at the present time. This is more than probable. This great emancipator of the slave and martyr to his fidelity to the integrity of the Republic belongs to the class whom the ages fondly cherish. Not as a secondary orb, but as a star of the first magnitude, he will shine forever in the firmament of the world's illustrious and honored heroes.

So far as personal qualities in the make-up of Mr. Lincoln are concerned there are two which deserve to be especially emphasized.

One of them is the extraordinary mental gifts which he possessed. He was not a precocious financier like Hamilton. He was not a political theorizer like Jefferson. He was not a profound jurist like Marshall. He was not an all-around philosopher like Franklin. He was not an erudite scholar like the younger Adams. He was not a mili-

tary strategist and state founder like Washington. Clay, Webster, Seward, Chase, Sumner,—each and all of them surpassed him in some particulars. But for all this he had a rare and original mind, and one which peculiarly fitted him for the matchless service he was to render the state.

As one looked at him in a casual way the impression he made was that of a man standing out by himself—singular and possibly eccentric. His physical build, his mode of address, his method of illustration, his way of putting a case, were all his own. There was nothing conventional or traditional in his habits of thought,—nothing just like other people in what he said or did; but any thought or statement uttered by him was pretty sure to have on it,—“Abraham Lincoln—his mark.”

It was this striking individuality of the man which made him fall such an easy victim to the caricurist. He was of the type of man which can be easily ridiculed and even calumniated. The sublimity of his soul, the nobleness of his purpose, the purity of his heart, the majesty of his nature, were hedged about with a quaint address at which one could easily be made to laugh.

But all that was strange and awkward was speedily forgotten when one came into a sympathetic apprehension of the man, and realized his mastery of great ideas and fundamental principles, and the strength and grasp of his intellect, and the grandeur of his aims.

In proof of the possession by Mr. Lincoln of a superior brain, as well as of rare native vigor of every sort, observe the difficulties he had to overcome. He was born into a home in which there was no education and into a community in which there were no educational facilities. At an age when most boys are beginning to open their books and to find their way into the rudiments of learning, this lad was put to work with his axe to assist in clearing away the forest from what was to be his father's farm. This and kindred forms of activity engaged him for many subsequent years.

At an earlier period of their lives many of the men who were afterwards to be Mr. Lincoln's competitors and antagonists had graduated at the best institutions of the land. Everett was out of college with the highest honors of his class at less than sixteen. Clay, who is sometimes referred to as a fine illustration of a self-made man, had had such earlier advantages of association with intelligent minds, and such convenient access to the best books and the best talkers, and had been able to push forward so rapidly, that at twenty he was ready to be admitted to the bar. Mr. Lincoln never had over a year of schooling in his whole life; and the little he did have was of the rude backwoods order. Up to the time of his leaving home the list of books within his reach was an exceedingly meager one. His mother

taught him to read; his foster-mother encouraged him in reading; though he himself was so fond of books that he needed little urging to avail himself of every opportunity to pour over them. Esop's Fables, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, a Life of Washington, and the Bible—an exceptionally choice selection, let it be said in passing—exhausted the stock of literature to which he had access.

This, however, was not the end of the privations and disadvantages Mr. Lincoln was forced to experience.

One at eighteen need not despair of an education, though a precious segment of the life is gone, if only the opportunity of study can even then be afforded, and there is a disposition to push patiently and resolutely on. But Mr. Lincoln was not permitted to turn from the farm to books. It was not to academic halls with their wise and faithful instructors, but to flat-boats that he wended his way. After the better part of a year at this, it was farming again as a common laborer for a common laborer's wages. Then it was fighting Indians, managing the mails of a country postoffice in connection with a little store, surveying, helping his parents, now and then dipping into local politics, groping his way, reading and studying as he had a chance; and yet not finding the path open to the practice of the law until he was about thirty years of age.

Burke was thirty-six before he ventured into public life. Sumner who, in some particulars, made Burke his model, was also about thirty-six before he would allow his name to be used in connection with political office. But these men had been intense students all their lives, and students with the express purpose of fitting themselves for high and responsible stations. They refused to appear earlier because they thought a less number of years given to close and severe preparation insufficient.

Mr. Lincoln had nothing of all this, and yet he was soon found at the front in one of the most terrific conflicts which ever shook a continent. Even Mr. Douglas, whose name is so closely associated with Mr. Lincoln's had a far more propitious environment with which to start, and far superior facilities for acquiring the mental discipline he needed to qualify him for a career of statesmanship. Mr. Seward, Mr. Chase, Mr. Fessenden, who were so conspicuous at the period when Mr. Lincoln was at the height of his influence and power, laid the foundation of their future in the best culture which the best schools of the nation could afford.

Yet it was Mr. Lincoln, with all his disadvantages and his tardy arrival on the stage, who defined the issue between the North and South, between Freedom and Slavery, in a more intelligible, practical and concrete way than any other man had ever defined it, and in a way, too, to render any further attempts at definition unnecessary,

when he said: "This government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. It will become all one thing, or all the other." It was Mr. Lincoln who went to New York and delivered the ablest political speech of his generation. It was Mr. Lincoln who gave to the country an Inaugural Address—his second—which has no mate in our annals. It was Mr. Lincoln, by the side and in an unconscious competition with the most polished orator the nation had to present, who uttered words at Gettysburg which will endure as long as the story of the great and decisive battle which was there fought.

All this goes to show native endowments of a very remarkable type. Only through the possession of such gifts of mind, held in fee simple from God, could the man ever have seen the truth so clearly as he did, and accomplished such tremendous tasks as fell to his lot, and hewed his way to an imperishable renown. In all his statements he was clear, direct, keen, analytic, and logical to an eminent degree. He could also be beautiful and tender; though he had no pride of intellect and no love of display to lead him astray after fine sentences. But he had few equals in his capacity to state a case.

A distinguished judge of Massachusetts was once asked: "What is an argument?" His reply was: "A fact skilfully used." On analysis of his speeches it would be found that Mr. Lincoln argued in this way, and that he was a superb example of this kind of arguer.

Soon after Mr. Lincoln's death this account of an address which he delivered in Kansas was furnished the press by Richardson who was then correspondent of the New York Tribune: "Not more than forty people assembled in the little bare-walled court house. There was none of the magnetism of a multitude to inspire the long, angular, ungainly orator, who rose up behind a rough table. With little gesticulation, and that little ungraceful, he began, not to declaim, but to talk. In a conversational tone he argued the question of slavery in the Territories in the language of an average Ohio or New York farmer. I thought: 'If the Illinoisans consider this a great man their ideas must be very peculiar.' But in ten or fifteen minutes I was unconsciously and irresistably drawn by the clearness and closeness of his argument. Link after link it was forged and welded like a blacksmith's chain. He made few assertions, but merely asked questions: 'Is not this true?' 'If you admit this fact is not this induction correct?' Give him his premises, and his conclusions were inevitable as death. His fairness and candor were very noticeable. He ridiculed nothing, burlesqued nothing, and misrepresented nothing. So far from distorting the views held by Mr. Douglas and his adherents, he stated them with more strength, probably, than any one of their advocates could have done. Then very modestly and cour-

teously he inquired into their soundness. He was too kind for bitterness and too great for vituperation."

The address lasted for about two hours. At its close there was a call for some one to reply. An ex-Kentuckian slave-holder was drafted into the service. This is Mr. Richardson's account of the way he began: "I have heard, during my life, all the ablest public speakers, all the eminent statesmen of the past and present generations. And while I dissent utterly from the doctrines of this address, and shall endeavor to refute some of them, candor compels me to say that it is the ablest and most logical speech to which I ever listened."

People did not think of Mr. Lincoln as a great orator. He lacked the grandeur and impressiveness which characterized the utterances of Webster; the grace and fluency of speech which belonged to Clay; the scholarly erudition and refinement associated with the name of Everett; the flood of eloquence which poured from the mouth of Rufus Choate. None the less he could state his case and carry his point with the best of them.

It is a singular fact, and one it seems strange the biographers of Mr. Lincoln and the critics of his style of address have never noticed, that in his way of handling an audience, especially when popular prejudices were to be encountered, and propositions were to be laid down which would not be readily accepted, he adopted, in many instances, the precise method of Demosthenes. There are sentences in Mr. Lincoln's speeches which are the exact mates of sentences to be found in the "Philipics" or the great "Oration on the Crown." A fact so striking has but one explanation. The nature of his mind was such that by the simple force of his instincts he was led to adopt the method of address suggested and applied by the highest art. He may have read, though it is more than likely that he did not, the orations of this great master of antiquity; but whether he read them or not, he never could have imitated Demosthenes without having in a large degree, not through cultivation alone or chiefly, but through original endowment, the very faculties of clear perception and clear statement which marked that wonderful man of Greece.

It was after his own kind, but like Jonathan Edwards, like Benjamin Franklin, like Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mr. Lincoln had intellectual genius.

But it was the high moral quality in Mr. Lincoln which constituted his chief excellence.

He saw clearly the distinction between right and wrong; and the right never failed to command his loyalty as the wrong never failed to awaken and arouse his opposition. He was a lawyer; but he did not feel that his profession afforded him any warrant for attempting to override justice. He was in politics; but it never seemed to occur

to him that his interest in shaping the policy of the nation gave him license to utter the lies and play the tricks of the demagogue. He had a conscience, and it swayed him. He bowed to the majesty of truth. He cherished integrity. He acknowledged duty. He recognized the dignity of human nature. He stood square on the great doctrine of the equal rights of men. His patriotism was broad and unselfish. His best powers were dedicated to the welfare of his country and the progress of humanity.

Mr. Lincoln believed in God. But from all that can be gathered this belief was the result of later and more mature thinking, and not a conviction of his earlier years. At the outset he was inclined to atheism and infidelity, though his position was most likely that of the agnostic. The first book which he ever read—the book which he read and continued to read through all his life—made an impression on his mind which neither time nor circumstance nor temptation was ever able to efface; but the central truths and claims of the Bible he was not able to accept till later on in life.

His religious experience is an intensely interesting study. It was through reading a work on "The Evidences of Christianity," by Dr. James Smith, the pastor of the Presbyterian church at Springfield, Illinois, with which as a pew-holder and attentive listener, Mr. Lincoln came at length to be identified, that he became satisfied of the solid ground on which the Christian system rests. In speaking of this in a letter to a man who has published the statement that Mr. Lincoln never changed his early position, Dr. Smith said: "It was my honor to place before Mr. Lincoln arguments designed to prove the divine authority and inspiration of the Scriptures, accompanied by the arguments of infidel objectors in their own language. To the arguments on both sides Mr. Lincoln gave a most patient, impartial and searching investigation. To use his own language, he examined the arguments as a lawyer who is anxious to reach the truth investigates testimony. The result was the announcement by himself that the argument in favor of the divine authority and inspiration of the Scriptures was unanswerable."

The Rev. Dr. Gurley, who was one of the able and eminent ministers of his day, and who was Mr. Lincoln's pastor at Washington, has left this statement on record: "In the latter days of his chastened and weary life, after the death of his son Willie, and his visit to the battle-field of Gettysburg, he said with tears in his eyes, that he had lost confidence in everything but God, and that he now believed his heart was changed, and that he loved the Saviour, and if he was not deceived in himself, it was his intention soon to make a profession of religion."

Noah Brooks, whose name in the public estimation for many

years stood as the synonym of intelligence and integrity, and who during his life at the capital of the nation was one of the most intimate personal friends which Mr. Lincoln had, has gone on record to this effect: "While I never tried to draw anything like a statement of his views from him, yet he freely expressed himself to me as having 'a hope of blessed immortality through Jesus Christ.' His views seemed to settle so naturally around that statement that I considered no other necessary. His language seemed not that of an inquirer, but of one who had a prior settled belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. Once or twice, speaking to me of the change which had come over him, he said while he could not fix any definite time, yet it was after he came here, and I am very positive that in his own mind he identified it with about the time of Willie's death. He said, too, that after he went to the White House he kept up the habit of daily prayer. Sometimes he said it was only ten words; but these ten words he had."

This is all in keeping with the few words which Mr. Lincoln spoke when he left Springfield for Washington. These words are familiar to us all; but they are so tender, and they reveal so much of the man, that it can do no harm to refresh our memories by reciting them once more. "My friends," so he said, "no one not in my position can appreciate the sadness I feel at this parting. To this people I owe all that I am. Here I have lived more than a quarter of a century; here my children were born, and here one of them lies buried. I know not how soon I shall see you again. A duty devolves on me which is, perhaps, greater than that which has devolved on any other man since the days of Washington. He never would have succeeded except for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I cannot succeed without the same divine aid which sustained him; and on the same Almighty Being I place my reliance for support. And I hope you, my friends, will all pray that I may receive that divine assistance, without which I cannot succeed; but with which success is certain."

A company of ministers and others once called on Mr. Lincoln at the White House to pay him their respects, and encourage him as well as receive encouragement from him, if they might. It was in the midst of the darkest days of the momentous conflict. This is in part what he said to them: "Gentlemen, my hope of success in this struggle rests on the immutable foundation of the justness and goodness of God. When events are very threatening I still hope that in some way all will be well in the end, because our cause is just and God is on our side."

But one of the most touching as well as most convincing testimonies to the faith which Mr. Lincoln had in God and to his habit of

communion with Him, is that furnished by General Rusling in the report of a conversation he heard between the President and General Sickles on the Sunday after the battle of Gettysburg. General Sickles lost a leg in that battle. He was taken immediately to Washington. General Rusling who relates this incident was a member of General Sickles staff. He called to see him, and while there Mr. Lincoln came in and remained in conversation with Sickles for something like an hour. In the course of the conversation General Sickles turned to the President and asked him what his thoughts were during the Gettysburg campaign, and whether he was anxious about the issue of it. This is what follows in the narrative: "Mr. Lincoln gravely replied, 'No, he was not; that some of his cabinet and many others in Washington were, but that he himself had had no fears.' General Sickles inquired how this was, and seemed curious about it. Mr. Lincoln hesitated; but finally replied: 'Well, I will tell you how it was. In the period of your campaign up there, when everybody was panic stricken, and nobody could tell what was going to happen, oppressed by the gravity of our affairs, I went into my room one day and locked the door, and got down on my knees before Almighty God, and prayed to Him mightily for victory at Gettysburg. I told Him this was His war, and our cause His cause; but that we couldn't stand another Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville. And I then and there made a solemn vow to Almighty God that if He would stand by our boys at Gettysburg I would stand by Him. And He *did*, and I *will*. And after that—I don't know how it was and I can't explain it—but soon a sweet comfort crept into my soul that things would go all right at Gettysburg, and that is why I had no fears about you.' He said this solemnly and pathetically, as if from the very depths of his heart; and both Sickles and myself were deeply touched by his manner."

What an impressive picture! How it mates that other impressive picture! With what fitness ought the two to be hung together in the gallery of every American heart! Washington on his knees crying out for help at Valley Forge! Lincoln on his knees entering into sacred covenant with God face to face with Gettysburg!

It has been claimed by men who were supposed to be friends of Mr. Lincoln, and who stood so near him at times in their lives that the public might be expected to believe they were eminently qualified to make a correct representation of his real religious belief and character, that in all his talk about God and prayer and providence he was but acting a shrewd part. This is the claim made by his old law partner.

But this is trying to cover him with infamy. Public men frequently use religious terms and phrases; and one runs but little risk of doing violence to sweet charity when he expresses the opinion that

too often they employ these words only as eloquent rhetorical phrases with which to round out empty and deceptive periods. With Mr. Lincoln this would have been impossible. His was a nature incapable of sham and cant and mockery. He did not say what he did not feel. To him life in all its phases was a serious responsibility; and he had no idea that men could make headway without God. There is no likelihood that Mr. Lincoln's old law partner, even if he ever knew anything about the deepest thinking and the inner spiritual life of this man, had the remotest notion of what was going on in his mind during the stress and storm of those closing years of his life. He would be the last man in the world to whom the President would communicate those sacred experiences.

Believing in God as he came to do with all his heart, and realizing his need of the divine assistance; loyal to righteousness and liberty as he was, and firmly persuaded that without these the nation would not be able to endure; possessed of a soul that was prophetic, and in certain moods half dreamy and mystical, Mr. Lincoln was nevertheless intensely practical. Cherishing the Republic because he saw that under this form of government man as man has the largest measure of civil rights and the best opportunities for getting on which it is possible to afford him; cherishing the Union with all the fervor of an intelligent and intense patriotism, because he saw that the destruction of the integrity of these States would involve the destruction of free institutions; hating slavery with all the intensity which could well be shown by a nature so calm and under such self-control, Mr. Lincoln yet held himself steadily and firmly to what was feasible in the premises.

Under the constitution, with the history of the nation what it was, with the law what it was, and with public sentiment so far along and no further, some things could be done, and some things could not be done. The man whose high destiny and crowning service to the state and to humanity it was to be, under the appointment of God, to do the miraculous and break every chain and let the oppressed go free, stuck to the things which could be done.

Mr. Lincoln saw that justice and equity afforded the only safe policy for a nation to pursue; and that liberty is the inalienable right of every human being who has not committed a crime or for any other valid reason is not fit to be at large. But he saw also, and with equal clearness, that it requires much time and patience to realize high ideals. He was a true democrat; but he was a wise democrat. Opposed in every fibre of his being, both on the ground of justice and of national policy, to the gigantic and awful iniquity of American slavery, still Mr. Lincoln was not a pioneer in the effort to rid the land of this curse. Garrison, Phillips, the Lovejoys, Greeley, Beecher,

Adams, Mrs. Stowe, Giddings, Seward, Sumner, and Whittier—not to mention many others, both men and women—had all raised their voice against both the moral outrage and the encroachments of the “peculiar institution” before this future president and emancipator had taken any conspicuous position in opposition to the evil. He never stepped out of the ranks of the great political organization of which he was a member until that party ceased to exist. He was never what was called a radical anti-slavery agitator. Had there not been these radical anti-slavery agitators to instruct the people and charge public opinion with the heats of a fiery indignation against this monstrous wrong, it is doubtful if Mr. Lincoln would have had any fulcrum over which to work his lever in accomplishing the complete overthrow of an injustice so huge and menacing. On the other hand, had there not been a man just like Mr. Lincoln, a man in thorough sympathy with the slave and in heartiest accord with every measure having any promise in it of setting him free, yet conservative in his temperament and habits, careful, considerate of all interests involved, somewhat slow to move—not stupidly slow but wisely slow—it is doubtful if the agitation which was so needful and in many instances so heroic and self-sacrificing, would have borne the glorious fruit it did. The future President kept in touch with the masses. He never got so far ahead of them that he could not influence and lead them. He never lagged so far behind the masses that they could not use him. He held to the practicable.

But it will be well, perhaps, to allow Mr. Lincoln himself to define the attitude in which he stood in those years just before the outbreak of the rebellion. Speaking at Cincinnati, in September, 1859, with an eye on the Kentuckians just across the river, and telling them what the party in opposition to slavery would do if advanced to power, he used this language:

“I will tell you, so far as I am authorized to speak for the opposition, what we mean to do with you. We mean to treat you, as near as we possibly can, as Washington, Jefferson and Madison treated you. We mean to leave you alone, and in no way to interfere with your institutions; to abide by all and every compromise of the Constitution.”

Having said this, he turned the subject about and went on after this fashion, using words which seem now to have been strangely and impressively prophetic:

“I have told you what we mean to do. I want to know, now, when that thing takes place what you mean to do. I often here it intimated that you mean to divide the Union. * * * Well, then, I want to know what you are going to do with your half of it? * * *

* Are you going to build up a wall some way between your country and ours, by which that movable property of yours can't come over

here any more, to the danger of your losing it? Do you think you can better yourselves on that subject, by leaving us here under no obligations whatever to return those specimens of your movable property that come hither? You have divided the Union because we would not do right with you, as you think, upon that subject; when we cease to be under obligations to do anything for you, how much better off do you think you will be? Will you make war upon us and kill us all? Why, gentlemen, I think you are as gallant and as brave men as live; that you can fight as bravely in a good cause, man for man, as any other people living; * * * but, man for man, you are not better than we are, and there are not so many of you as there are of us. You will never make much of a hand at whipping us. If we were fewer in numbers than you, I think you could whip us; if we were equal it would likely be a drawn battle; but being inferior in numbers, you will make nothing by attempting to master us."

This was the man, so clear-visioned and brave, and yet so self-contained and patient, who had gone just so far and no further in his conception of what ought to be done, whom God, through the will of the people, elevated to the highest place in the gift of the people and clothed with the august authority and power of the Chief Executive of the Nation. It is simply one of the marvels of history, and helps us to understand some of the strange ways in which men have been brought to the front in the past when great forward movements in society were to be executed, and mighty revolutions accomplished.

In my study is a picture, engraved by Sartain, from an original portrait of Mr. Lincoln, painted by Marchant at the White House in 1863. The President is represented in an easy sitting posture beside a table. His left arm rests upon the table with his hand just bent over the edge. Under his elbow is the Emancipation Proclamation with his signature attached. His right arm is at his side and between thumb and finger is the quill pen with which the great instrument was signed. Just back of him, in the upper right hand corner of the picture, on a pedestal, is the sandaled foot of liberty, and under the foot a broken chain. It is a large strong chain, with mighty links, but it is broken.

But the impressive feature of the picture is not these details, striking and significant as they are, but the face of Mr. Lincoln. This, once seen, can never be forgotten. It haunts the soul as the burning bush must have haunted Moses. He has just performed his great act, and before rising from his seat has fallen back into a mood of profound meditation. If one may venture to interpret what is going on in his mind from the look on his face, so serious, so burdened, and so full of traces of deep and earnest thought, a number of things immediately suggest themselves. He is picturing to himself the awful conflict which is raging,—the madness of it, the wickedness of it,

the waste of property it has involved, and the thousands upon thousands of precious lives it has sucked down into the abyss of death; and how it has all turned and is to turn on the matter of that document he has just signed. He is recalling to his imagination the countless woes which have been suffered by a hopeless and helpless race in their centuries of unrequited toil, and in the bitter degradation into which they have been thrust. With a joy akin to pathos, he is anticipating the gladness with which in lowly cabins and on sugar plantations and in rice swamps and wherever in the whole broad land the shackles of servitude have been worn, the tidings of what he has now done will be received. Then, coming back to himself, and hurriedly putting together the few meager facts of his own history,—his lowly birth, his trials and privations in youth and early manhood, and all the disabilities under which he had labored, he is wondering with an amazement that well-nigh overwhelms him that it is he who has put his name to this great act of justice.

There is but one explanation of his great power and influence. In the sense in which Charlemagne, and William the Conqueror, and Oliver Cromwell, and George Washington, were providential men, Abraham Lincoln was a providential man. Mr. Lincoln sits there, as he is seen in the picture, with that pen in his hand, and that Emancipation Proclamation signed, and that broken chain behind him, because he was raised up of God, and in his natural endowments of mind and moral sense, and in the circumstances of his birth, and in his training and no training, was fitted to be an instrument in the divine hands for delivering a race from bondage and saving a great nation. He was exactly suited to the high business which God had at heart, and he let God use him for the working out of His beneficent purposes.

“Such was he, our Martyr-Chief.

* * *

Nature, they say, doth dote
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan
 Repeating us by rote;
For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast
 Of the unexhausted west.
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new.
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.

* * * * *

His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind,
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,
A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors blind;
Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined.
Fruitful and friendly for all human kind;
Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.

* * * * * *

Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face
 to face; * * * *

* * * * , and standing like a tower.
Our children shall behold his fame,

 The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American.”

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